proposal to improve the quality of telecommunication services in the country;

(b) whether some new schemes are being launched for this purpose; and

(c) if so, the details of specific schemes drawn up and the steps taken to improve telecommunication services in the tribal and inaccessible areas, particularly in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) The telecom services of tribal and inaccessible areas are being upgraded. The specific schemes drawn to improve quality of telecom. services are as:—

(i) New electronic switches are being inducted into the network to upgrade and modernise the services.

(ii) New modern tools and testing aids are being introduced.

(iii) Upgradation/Rehabilitation of outdoor network.

(iv) Provision of reliable transmission media.

(v) Computerised telephone billing is being introduced in a phased manner.

(vi) Constant monitoring of performance.

(vii) Providing reliable public telephones in villages through Radio Wireless system.

(viii) Upgrading the skills of technical staff through periodical training programmes.

(ix) Tribal sub-plan (1992—97) of Orissa envisages installation of 48 number of telephone exchanges, addition of a net switching capacity of 13200 lines and 8200 telephone connections. 155 stations are planned to be provided with STD facility.

Multiple Operators in the same Switch Area

2412. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the new telecom policy envisages multiple operators working in the same switch area;

(b) if so, whether these operators will be operating through underground cable network; and

(c) how the efficiency of telecom. services can be ensured in the context of multiple ducts for telecom operators, as well as operations of other agencies like water supply, electricity, etc. also acting underground?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes Sir. As per the guidelines issued by the Government to implement the National Telecom Policy, in addition to DOT, there will be one private operator per Telecom Circle to provide telephone services.

(b) The conditions of tender document, which has been floated for inviting bids from Indian companies, provide that copper cable can be used only in the last 500 meters of the subscriber loop. Remaining part of the network will use wireless of optical fibre cables. While in the case of wireless, use of underground space will not be required, in the case of optical fibre cable, due to its very high capacity, requirements of underground space will be minimal.

(c) The operator will be required to adhere to the specifications and standards laid down by the competent telecom authority to ensure efficiency of telecom services. Such activities will have to be carried out in co-ordination with other agencies using underground space.